

I'M GOING HOME

BY

Emma Scott Nasmith

To Dear Mrs Moffat
with Christmas greetings
from the wife and her
friend Emma Scott Massey.

TO VICTORIA—

*“Whose hand is always
just above my shoulder
Hail and hearken from
the realms of help.”*

I'm Going Home

THE old home town, now a city, has invited us to go home and spend a week, having a good time, among old friends, old environments and old associations.

I am going home!

They say everybody will be there. Then there will be an innumerable host—those we can see and many we cannot see! Some will be able to see them.

“For spirit with spirit can meet,
Closer are they than breathing,
Nearer than hands or feet.”

As I think of it I seem to hear thunder, see lightning, feel wind and rain on my face.

I am a child again, in my attic bedroom, awakened by the patter of rain on the roof. I want to go out and be part of all the beauty and wonder. I hear the cry of a kitten, I spring from my bed hurry down the attic stair. I am stopped by Maria.

“Go back to bed, dear,” says Maria.

“Maria, I hear the cry of a kitten, please let me go and bring it in?”

"It has been brought in," she says—"Now go back to your bed, like a good little girl, and you will see your kitty in the morning."

Being but four, I go back to my bed to dream of a kitty, and the coming of the day.

Early in the morning I am taken to my mother's room to see the kitten, and find instead, a little red-headed baby, snuggling close to my mother's side.

"This is your little boy to keep" — said my mother.

From that moment I was truly alive. Every happening of my life dates from that night of storm and its morning of joy. I am going home.

When I was five, Maria dressed me very carefully one morning, and my only sister, older than I, took me to school.

"She is such a little thing, take her home till she grows bigger"—said the teacher.

"She is five" — said my sister, "and the worst chatterbox, she wakes the baby, and mother wants to get rid of her."

"Keep the little thing, and do the best you can for her," said Mr. Douglas, a trustee, who was visiting the school, "I know her mother."

So I proudly went to school when I was five, to make life easier for my mother. I loved Miss Campbell. I'll see her when I go home. Miss Polly Smith and Miss Emma Spragge were my teachers of a later date. I adored them, their lovely manners and quiet voices have been a constant memory, like a sweet perfume. Shall I see them when I go home? When either of them came into the room I felt that all things would go well with me; but when Miss M came in I knew I was going to be a bad girl. The desire to talk when she was in the room was irresistible. She punished me with a strap that wound itself around the back of my hand and invariably raised blisters. On those days I was careful to keep my hands in the background lest anyone should see the blisters and I would be disgraced.

Jane Davis, the girl who sat in front of me at school, would say — "Why don't you tell your mother?"

"Because I am ashamed and know mother would punish me for being disobedient."

"That's right," said Kate Coulson, "never be a tattle-tale." Kate Coulson, with clustering fair curls all over her shapely head, was my ideal school girl.

We were a happy family of six children in a Clergyman's home. I hear my mother say, "Run

along little girl, get the bread for supper and thank Mr. Fessant for the cottage loaf, he sent me yesterday, it was most delicious. Charge the bread and here is some money to do some shopping with. Tie it in your handkerchief. Do not stay to play with Martha and Lily. Go to the Pork House and ask Mr. Lloyd if he will please give you some Fresh Lamb Chops and a Calf's Liver. Take your basket with a clean towel to wrap them in. Get two pounds of the best butter and a dozen fresh eggs at Boyd's. Go to Boak and Woods for two spools of thread, white and black, No. 40. The meat will be twenty-five cents, two pounds of butter will be twenty-five cents, a dozen of eggs will be ten cents and the spools will be five cents. There's sixty-five cents and here's a penny to buy some taffy at Miss West's. Now run along, Maria is waiting to broil the chops and liver. The potatoes are in the oven baking for supper."

I hurry along down the garden path, under the plum and apple trees, through the hole in the fence, where a picket is off, over the meadow, crossing a rushing stream on a narrow plank, then climb the stile opposite the bake-shop with "S. Fessant" in black letters, above the door.

"How is thy mother," says Stephen Fessant, the Quaker, in answer to the tingle of the bell above the door? "Thee can come into the bake-house

and choose the loaf for thy mother," he said, as I gave him my mother's thanks.

I go and see the bread, brown and crusty, on the stones of the Dutch oven. He hands me a long wooden shovel with the words "Fish out the choice loaf for thy Mother." With pride I do as I am told. The smell of that bread is in my nostrils as I write.

Such suppers as we had in that home! After our evening meal there was prayers. Then the children had to pile up and carry out the dishes to the kitchen. Then came the joy of going into the study where father would read to us for an hour. 'Twas there we learned to love Shakespeare. Those first lessons in scansion have never been forgotten. The study was a beautiful room to us. There were some fine pieces of old walnut furniture. The walls were lined with books, books we had access to at any and all times, on one condition, that our hands were clean. Then there were some old English prints. A great copy of Knight's Shakespeare was on a stand low enough for the smallest child to see the pictures.

After our study hour, the older children were free to go and play, to play games in the summer time, sleighriding or skating in the winter time. What skaters there were in that old Boyd Street Rink. I used to watch my two big brothers skat-

ing with their friends, George Inglis, Tom Douglas, Bill Allan, Charlie Fox, Sid Brown, Jim Brown, R. P. Butchant and Bob Kennedy, Clarice Gordon, Annie Fox, Miss Vick, Maggie Miller, Jenny Kennedy, Jenny Allan, Lou Green and Cassie Miller, I thought they were the grandest skaters in the world, I think so still. How well I remember the Christmas I got a pair of wooden skates, screwing them into the heels of my boots and strapping them on, then coaxing my brothers to take me around the rink just once. They would take me around just once and then give me five cents to go home. There came a day when the other boys would take me around and they did not give me five cents to go home.

I'm going home.

Will I see that old study that my mother took so great a pride in, with the candlesticks, bits of pewter and silver brought from Ireland when she came, a little child, in a sailing vessel with her parents twelve weeks at sea. Will I hear again the stories of that crossing and of the struggles of the pioneers, to hew out homes in the great woods of Ontario?

I remember one night in particular at our home, when the Rev. John Sommerville, Rev. W. B. Danard and Mr. W. P. Telfer were having some supper of bread and cheese and apple cider, Mr.



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